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MAIN TRENDS IN SOVIET CAPABILITES AND POLICIES 1957-1962

SUMMARY

(The complete text of this estimate has been published separately.)

Submitted by the

DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

The following intelligence organizations participated in the preparation of this estimate: The Central Intelligence Agency and the intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, The Joint Staff, and the Atomic Energy Commission.

Concurred in by the

INTELLIGENCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

on 12 November 1957. Concurring were The Director of Intelligence and Research, Department of State; the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Army; the Director of Naval Intelligence; the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, USAF; the Deputy Director for Intelligence, The Joint Staff; and the Atomic Energy Commission Representative to the IAC. The Assistant Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, abstained, the subject being outside of his jurisdiction.

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MAIN TRENDS IN SOVIET CAPABILITIES AND POLICIES, 1957–1962

THE PROBLEM

To review significant developments affecting the USSR's internal political situation, relations with Bloc states, economic situation, military programs, and foreign policy, and to estimate probable Soviet courses of action through 1962.

SUMMARY ESTIMATE

1. Both the Soviet internal scene and Soviet external policy continue to be strongly marked by change and innovation. The ascendance of Khrushchev has further accentuated the flexibility and pragmatism of the post-Stalin leaders' approach to their major problems. But none of the changes in Soviet policy suggests any alteration in basic aims or in the concept of an irreconcilable conflict between the Communist and non-Communist worlds. Indeed the Soviet leaders display a great deal of confidence, buttressed by their recent political and technological successes, in the prospects for ultimate victory of their side.

Trends in Soviet Foreign Policy

2. The respect of the Soviet leaders for US nuclear power will continue and they are unlikely to initiate general war or to pursue courses of action which, in their judgment, gravely risk general war, over the next five years. At the same time, however, they are probably confident that their own growing nuclear capabilities, added to their great conventional strength, are increasingly deterring the US and its allies from courses of action gravely risking general war. As a result the USSR probably regards itself as progressively achieving greater freedom of maneuver in local situations.[1] The

[1] The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, USAF, does *not* agree with the estimate that the Soviets are likely to feel that they are achieving *greater* freedom of maneuver nor that they will regard the US as *increasingly* inhibited by growing Soviet strengths.

The US has *always* been cautious of risking general war. This is certainly evident to the Soviets. But also evident to them are examples such as Berlin, Korea, Taiwan, and Syria which underline US firmness when a clear challenge is presented.

The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, USAF, has found no specific evidence or indicators from which the Soviets could derive the opinion that US caution will *increase* as Soviet nuclear capabilities grow. In fact, a convincing case could be made for increasing *Soviet* caution, based on fear that the West would feel compelled to exercise its superior military capabilities before the Soviets might reverse the relative military advantage.

It appears to the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, USAF, that *increasing* Soviet boldness

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USSR's posture during the Suez and Syrian crises convinces us that the use of threats will remain a basic element in Soviet policy. At times the Soviet leaders will probably bring the threat of Communist military strength into the open by menacing words or harsh diplomatic exchanges. Moreover, the USSR might go considerably further in certain situations — e.g., by supporting indigenous Communist or other forces in local military action, or even sending Soviet "volunteers," judging that grave risk of general war would not result. Thus the risks of general war arising through miscalculation may increase.

3. But in general the Soviet leaders will probably continue to prefer non-military means of achieving their objectives. They probably regard the present world situation as ripe to develop further in their favor through continuation of such tactics. While determined to build up their armed strength against any eventuality, the present leaders have probably decided that a continuation of "peaceful coexistence" will best assure against the risks of nuclear conflict and at the same time offer far-reaching opportunities to weaken and divide the Western powers and to promote Soviet influence in the key underdeveloped areas of the world.

4. Almost certainly the Soviet leaders expect further crises as the interests of the two great power groupings clash in the Middle East and elsewhere. They will take a strong line in such crises. Yet we believe that in general they will continue to emphasize such tactics as high-level goodwill visits, broadened contacts, promotion of cultural and other exchanges, expanded foreign trade, long-term credits and technical assistance, and arms aid. Their aim will be to cause further blurring of the lines between the Communist and non-Communist worlds and to undermine and cause a retraction of Western, especially US, strength from around the periphery of the Bloc.

5. The Soviets will almost certainly intensify their efforts to woo the underdeveloped countries, particularly in Asia and Africa, in order to estrange them from the West and to lay the groundwork for growing Soviet influence. The USSR has the economic resources for considerably expanding its "trade and aid" campaign, while its extensive stocks of obsolescent arms will permit it to capitalize further on the desires of many underdeveloped countries to strengthen themselves vis-a-vis their neighbors.

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during the next five years will be unlikely unless the Soviets attain clear military superiority, or unless the Soviets have reason to expect a wavering or irresoluteness in US policy. The first condition is not believed attainable; the second is not believed demonstrable. The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, USAF, believes therefore that paragraph 2 should read as follows: "The respect of the Soviet leaders for US nuclear power will continue and they are unlikey to initiate general war or to pursue courses of action which in their judgment, gravely risk general war over the next five years. At the same time, however, they probably regard their own growing nuclear capabilities, added to their great conventional strength, as enforcing caution on the Western powers. The USSR's posture during the Suez and Syrian crises convinces us that the use of threats will remain a basic element in Soviet policy. At times the Soviet leaders will probably bring the threat of Communist military strength into the open by menacing words,harsh diplomatic exchanges, by supporting indigenous Communist forces, or even sending "volunteers," judging that grave risk of general war would not result. The Soviets must recognize, however, that the possibilities of miscalculation in crisis situations are such that general war might nevertheless occur, and that preparedness for it is therefore essential. We remain convinced that the USSR will not desire to let any crisis develop to the point of seriously risking general war."

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6. The USSR clearly regards the chief immediate opportunities for expanding its influence to lie in the Middle East. It is shrewdly supporting Arab nationalism against the West and thereby attempting to avoid the appearance of seeking undue political influence of its own. It is also conscious of the extent to which vital Western interests are involved in the area, and of the risks which would arise from a direct test of strength between the great powers themselves. Nevertheless, its longer run aims are to eliminate Western military power and political influence from the area, to attain a position from which to control Middle East oil, and ultimately to dominate the area.

7. During the next few years the chief Soviet objective in Western Europe will be to weaken and divide the NATO powers and above all to induce a withdrawal of US military strength. To this end the USSR will continue to promote some form of European security treaty to replace both NATO and the Warsaw Pact. But the USSR will almost certainly remain adamant on German reunification on any terms except its own, however much this may limit its maneuverability in Western Europe.

8. As a means of forwarding their peaceful co-existence policy and of advancing their efforts to neutralize US nuclear striking power, the Soviets will seek on the whole to give the appearance of a flexible and constructive attitude on disarmament. They probably desire some form of simple, "first-stage" agreement with minimum inspection and control but we remain convinced that they will reject comprehensive inspection and controls.

Trends in Soviet Relations with Other Communist States

9. The USSR's reluctant acceptance of a degree of Polish autonomy and of Yugoslavia's special position, as well as its recognition of Communist China's stature and role within the Bloc, indicates a continuing belief that some greater flexibility in Soviet relations with other Communist states is both necessary and desirable in order to preserve and strengthen the Bloc. However, mindful of last year's developments in Poland and Hungary, the USSR now seems determined to go slow in any further evolution of its relationships with the European Satellites, and above all to avoid any repetition of the Hungarian or even Polish experiences. It would almost certainly revert to repressive policies in event of serious threats to its position in Eastern Europe. Barring such developments, we think the USSR will pursue a cautious policy of economic aid, adjustment to national peculiarities, and toleration here and there of a somewhat greater degree of Satellite autonomy.

10. The strong identity of interest among the various Bloc regimes, their dependence upon Soviet aid and support, and the USSR's overwhelming military power will tend to maintain the essential solidarity of the Bloc over at least the next five years. But the underlying forces released by developments since Stalin's death will persist, creating further instability within the Satellites. Additional changes in intra-Bloc relations are likely.

Internal Developments

11. Two of the major problems posed by Stalin's death have persisted: who is to rule, and how is the ruling to be done. While Stalin's successors agreed on fun-

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damental objectives — maintenance of Party dictatorship, continued military buildup, and rapid economic growth — they differed as to the policies best suited to pursue these aims in the conditions of the USSR today. These differences in turn complicated the problem of who was to rule, rendering the leadership unstable.

12. Now, after four years of uneasy collective leadership, Khrushchev has emerged as dominant. Although he still lacks the degree of power achieved by Stalin through the use of police terror, he has disposed of his major rivals and asserted Party mastery over the economic bureaucracy and the military. These developments have probably enhanced the stability of the Soviet leadership, though this leadership will be subject to continuing strain over the next several years as difficult policy problems arise. We think that only the most severe problems could threaten the present leadership arrangements, but, considering the magnitude of the problems which the regime faces, and the risks of failure in the bold programs which Khrushchev has undertaken, issues of such gravity could arise. In such an event Khrushchev would probably move toward absolute rule, if necessary attempting to reinstitute terror for this purpose. But important elements among the elite groups would be alert to and would probably oppose such a development, particularly if a recourse to terror were involved.

13. As to the question of how to rule, the present leadership has shown awareness of the need to overcome the alienation of the Soviet population which has been caused by fear and deprivation and expressed in apathy. Instead of a widespread use of terror, which in the end might not spare the leaders themselves, another approach was felt to be necessary in order to keep the society cohesive and responsive to central direction. In addition, a shift in emphasis to the use of incentives and the encouragement of initiative seemed to give promise of increasing Soviet strength, particularly in the economic field.

14. This approach has been extensively applied to the Soviet economy. A series of administrative reforms has sought to make better use of specialist knowledge, local talent, and individual initiative. The latest and largest of these is a radical reorganization of industry which seeks to transfer to officials on the spot more powers in the detailed execution of national policy. The incentive program particularly in agriculture, aims not only at stimulating higher labor productivity but also at increasing popular support for the Khrushchev regime. The highly ambitious housing and agricultural programs will probably be successful enough to provide a gain of perhaps as much as one-fifth in per capita consumption over the next five years.

15. The achievement of such a gain would probably produce some increase in popular support, but a consumption program of this size will compete more sharply than heretofore with requirements for industrial investment and defense. This competition has already been partly responsible for the abandonment of the Sixth Five-Year Plan (1956–60) in favor of a seven-year plan for 1959–65. The issue of competing priorities, however, has not been finally settled by this action and is certain to arise again.

16. Most of the changes which have occurred bear the stamp of Khrushchev;

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given his self-confidence and flexibility, the outlook is for further experimentation so long as he remains in power. By and large, we believe that his policies will be successful in generating more positive support among the population and in stimulating a further substantial growth in over-all Soviet power over the next five years. But his changes have created tensions and forces in Soviet society, the ultimate impact of which is difficult to foresee. The policy of a cautious relaxation applied in the intellectual field, for example, has had disagreeable consequences for the regime. Wider contacts with foreign countries have opened the USSR to disturbing influences. Youthful nonconformity is an increasing problem, and a number of critical writers are spreading among a small but increasing circle of readers a climate of dissatisfaction and of impatience with the pace of official reforms. The regime has made little progress in its counterattack upon these forces.

17. Moreover, Khrushchev's expansion of the Party's role as the chief instrument for managing the reform process places a heavy load upon it. With the downgrading of the secret police, the Party apparatus has assumed new responsibilities for insuring political conformity; with the abolition of most economic ministries it now has a much larger role in carrying out centrally determined economic policies. If the Party proves inadequate to these tasks, the prospects for success of the regime's ambitious economic and political programs will be greatly diminished.

18. The role of the party becomes even more critical when viewed in a perspective extending beyond the period of this estimate. For the next five years at least, the regime's totalitarian controls over the Soviet people almost certainly will not be seriously compromised. But over the longer run it is far from certain that the Soviet citizen can be educated to a higher level, urged to exercise his own initiative, given increasing opportunity for comparisons with other countries, and encouraged to expect a significant improvement in his living standard, and at the same time submit without question to a leadership which incessantly proclaims, and frequently exercises, the right to make all important decisions for him, regardless of his personal desires. Eventually it may turn out that the benevolent totalitarianism which Stalin's successors seek to achieve is an impossible contradiction and that the forces released in the search for it will require the leadership to revert to earlier patterns of control or to permit an evolution in some new direction. Even the latter changes would not necessarily alter the basic threat which a dynamic USSR poses to the Free World.

Trends in the Growth of Soviet Power

19. Notwithstanding the many problems confronting the Soviet leaders, we foresee a further rapid growth in the chief physical elements of Soviet power over the next five years. Particularly notable will be the continued rapid expansion of the Soviet economy, further scientific and technical advances in a wide variety of fields, and a continued buildup and modernization of the USSR's already massive military strength.

20. *Economic Growth.* Soviet economic growth over the next five years will continue to be faster than that of the US,

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though somewhat slower than during the Fifth Five-Year Plan (1951–55), chiefly because of some redirection of investment and a declining rate of growth in the labor force. We estimate the average growth in Soviet GNP as around six percent annually during the next five years. In dollar terms Soviet GNP would rise from about 40 percent of US GNP in 1956 to about 45 percent in 1962. However, estimated Soviet defense expenditures, in dollar terms, are already about equal to those of the US.

21. *Scientific and Technical Progress.* The rapid expansion of the USSR's technical and scientific capabilities, critical to the growth of Soviet industrial and military power, will also continue. Although total Soviet scientific capabilities may not equal those of the US, the USSR has been able to make comparable achievements and to forge ahead in certain areas of critical military and industrial significance by concentrating its efforts in these fields. The number of university level graduates employed in scientific and technical fields already exceeds that in the US, and probably will be about 40 percent greater than that in the US by 1962.

22. *Military Strength.* Of outstanding significance has been the USSR's progress in the development of advanced weapons and delivery systems:

a. The USSR is developing a variety of improved nuclear weapons, particularly those employing thermonuclear principles; its present stockpile could include weapons with yields ranging from about 4 KT up into the megaton range. By 1958–59 the most powerful Soviet bombs could probably yield up to 20 MT, but missile warheads would still have yields considerably less than this. We also estimate a substantial Soviet program for expanding fissionable materials production, but the availability of such materials will continue through 1962 to be a limiting factor on the size of many military as well as nonmilitary programs.

b. The USSR has probably tested an ICBM vehicle and we now tentatively estimate that it could have a few (say 10) prototype ICBMs available for operational use in 1959 or possibly even earlier, depending upon Soviet requirements for accuracy and reliability.[2] The USSR could now have available ballistic missiles with maximum ranges of 75, 175–200, 350, and 700 n.m.; by 1958 it could probably also begin to have available a 1000 n.m. IRBM.

23. Meanwhile, the USSR will probably continue to maintain a balanced and flexible structure of strong naval, air, and ground forces, supplementing these with new weapons. Nevertheless, the manpower strength of the Soviet forces appears to have been reduced considerably from Korean War peaks, and some further reductions and streamlining are likely, though not to a substantial degree.

a. We estimate that the Soviet long-range bomber force has grown to some 1,500 bombers at present, though it includes a larger number of jet medium bombers and fewer heavy bombers than we had previously estimated. While we think that this force will not change significantly in size during the period of this estimate, we believe that it will be further strengthened by the replacement of obsolete BULL piston medium bombers

[2] The estimate made in this paragraph must be considered tentative pending competion of SNIE 11-10-57: The Soviet ICBM Program.

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with jets, by the introduction of additional heavy bombers, and by further development of inflight refueling. However, any estimate of future strength must be highly tentative, especially for heavy bombers, since Soviet policy in these respects is still shrouded in doubt. Subject to such qualifications, we estimate that the Soviets may by mid-1960 have about 400–600 heavy bombers and tankers of jet and turboprop types, in a long-range air force totalling something between 1400 and 1700 bombers. We also estimate that the number of heavy bombers and tankers will probably remain fairly steady after 1960, while the total long-range bomber strength will probably decline slightly.[3]

b. Further strengthening of Soviet air defenses will occur as a result of improved fighter performance, a higher proportion of improved all-weather fighters, better radar and communications equipment, and widespread employment of improved surface-to-air and air-to-air missiles.

c. The Soviet ground forces have been extensively reorganized and modernized; further improvements in firepower and mobility are likely during 1958–62. Training and doctrine are being adapted for modern warfare, nuclear as well as non-nuclear. We still estimate about 175 line divisions, but their actual strengths probably vary from somewhat in excess of 70 percent of war strength to as low as 30 percent. Increasing attention is being paid to airborne and air-transportable forces, whose capabilities will increase considerably by 1962.

d. The Soviets are engaged in an extensive naval program, especially in the submarine category. There are recent indications that a shift to new designs of submarines may be in progress. Their submarine force is estimated at about 475 at mid-1957, including nearly 300 submarines of modern design. We estimate that the submarine force will approximate 560 submarines by mid-1962. The first submarine propulsion reactor could now be available, and by mid-1962 the USSR could probably produce about 20 nuclear-powered submarines. A few converted missile-launching submarines could now be in operation; and by mid-1962 the USSR may have a total of 50 in all categories of submarines equipped with guided missile armament.

[3] The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, USAF, believes that the USSR would regard it as essential to have a more substantial intercontinental attack capability, providing for greater strategic flexibility and a much larger capability for re-attack — in short, a force which would provide the Soviets a greater chance of success in general war — while they are working to acquire an additional nuclear delivery capability with new weapon systems, including long-range missiles. He therefore believes that the 400–600 heavy aircraft estimated above would all be bombers and that by mid-1961 there will be 300–500 additional aircraft as tankers in operational units.

The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Army, and the Deputy Director for Intelligence, The Joint Staff, believe, on the other hand, that the number of heavy bomber/tanker aircraft and the total number of long-range aircraft are both more likely to approximate the lower than the higher figures given above. See their footnote on page 33.

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